Anything You Need by brokenpromisesandhope

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Joyce walks in and sees Nancy cooking at her stove.

Anything You Need

Author's Note:

> Y'all know I love to start something a head canon and then it be long as HELL. So welcome to this fluffy little ficlet of Nancy being the cutest person on earth.
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So all of a sudden I just got this vision of Joyce coming home, she has like two hours between shifts and she sees Nancy in her kitchen, with a baby on her hip, cooking dinner. Now y'all know I could easily make this into a kid fic, but for some reason I'm feeling canon age. (only because you know damn well Joyce would not still be working like this when her kids are older) OK ANYWAY:

So for some reason Nancy is babysitting, maybe her parents are out of town, or the house is getting exterminated or something, so she's watching her siblings and she's at the Byers'. Maybe for a couple days too. The point is, her and Jonathan are pretty much playing house. Nancy doesn't have to watch her siblings as much as Jonathan of course, but, her dad works and when he's not working he's drinking, and her mom is always having some fucking tea party, or hair appointment or what the hell ever.

So she comes to the Byers', Mike is excited as hell because even though he loves his time with Nancy, loves watching The Golden Girls no matter how much he pretends to hate it, he's excited to hang out with Will. He's got his duffel bag, and Nancy's got both her and Holly's stuff packed in a small carry on suitcase, and they show up at the Byers' place.

Will is excited to hang out with Mike, and he loves Nancy. Nancy is fun, she knows how to do crafts, make fun food that they usually never eat, and always has extra money to rent movies from the video store.

Holly is nervous, clinging to her sister at every turn, Jonathan can

barely sit next to Nancy on the couch, not even touching her, without Holly hiding in Nancy's shirt. Eventually it's dinnertime, and Jonathan was just going to make PBJ's and chips. It was embarrassing, but it's all they had, and Nancy hadn't had a chance to bring food from their house before they'd had to leave.

Of course Jonathan waits til the last minute, when the boys are complaining loudly that they're hungry, and then Holly cries at the noise and Jonathan feels overwhelmed and like a dummy. Nancy just shushes him, kisses him softly and shakes her head when he says they have no food. Nancy reassures him that she can make something out of nothing, and gives him a few dollars and asks to take the boys to the video store so she can cook.

Jonathan is skeptical, a bit afraid of letting Nancy search through all their old, paint-peeled kitchen cupboards to find literally nothing. But it's Nancy. And she reassures him with a soft, pink lip gloss smile. As long as he promises to get her a pack of Twizzlers, she's fine.

So here's Joyce, just home from work, and has barely any time before her next shift. She's frazzled and should shower, at least to take her mind off the fact they have no food, and she's starving. She hadn't went grocery shopping yet this week. Not that there was money to go grocery shopping, but that wasn't the point. She figures she'll just make herself a pot of coffee and smoke a few cigarettes and she'll be fine. She moves to pull her hair into a ponytail as she pushes open the front door with her hip. She doesn't even bother kicking off her shoes. She'll get too comfortable before she has to leave again, when she wanders into the kitchen.

And there's Nancy Wheeler, baby girl Holly on her hip, cooking on her stove. Nancy's got her long hair piled up in a messy, yet chic bun, with a pink headband holding back her bangs, and silver dangle earrings, looking a bit too much like her mother. She's wearing light washed jeans and a soft looking pink sweater, and Holly's holding her necklace in one hand, the other one gripping Nancy's shoulder for dear life.

Nancy's swaying a bit, singing softly, Greatest Love of All, by Whitney Houston, and stirring a pot with a wooden spoon. Joyce doesn't want to intrerupt. She looks so at home in their mess of a

kitchen, her bare feet on cold, cracked tile floor, and Joyce is suddenly terrified. For herself, her son, and Nancy, whose seemed to worm her little dancer's body, adorned with jewelry and clothes that were probably close to her own mortgage into their lives,and seemed content to stay.

Joyce clears her throat and Nancy jumps slightly, voice breaking off, dropping the spoon in the pan.

"Mrs. Byers! Oh my, I didn't think you'd be home!" She says quickly, cheeks flushing.

"I have a couple hours before I have to be at the diner. Where are the boys?"

"Jonathan took them to the movie store, I was just making dinner.," says Nancy casually, picking back up the spoon.

"We have no food," Joyce says a bit harshly, though she can smell garlic, embarrassed to be admitting this to a sixteen year old who probably ate out more than Will ever had in his life.
"You didn't have much, says Nancy, "But you had enough. Lemme get you a plate, sit down," she insists, moving to the cupboard with the plates and bowls. She moves quickly and easily like she belongs there and Joyce can do nothing but sit down, shocked.

Jonathan was right. They didn't have food. Nancy searched the fridge, cabinet and freezer. There was no meat, so that was an issue right off the bat. Then Nancy remembered her friend who was vegan. So she searches the pantry again. Finds half of a 1 pound box of spaghetti noodles. There's no sauce of course, but there is two cans of stewed tomatoes. She finds onion, garlic and a nearly expired, half block of mozzarella cheese, butter and a few parmesan packets from the pizza joint.

It's not much, but it'll do. She sets to work cutting the crusts off the quarter loaf of bread, and rolling it flat as much as she can. She makes a tub of butter, garlic and parmesan, to spread on the bread, then cuts each slice into fourths, to go in the oven to serve as garlic bread. She cuts down the tomatoes, adds a bit of water and oil, and assorted spices to make them as much of a sauce as she can.

She boils water for the pasta and chops the onion, sauteeing that and the garlic, with some of the tomatoes for a rustic taste. She talks aloud to Holly, explaining her process for nothing more than to make herself feel like she knows what she's doing. Joyce doesn't own a grater, so she roughly chops the cheese in as thin of flakes she can, nearly cutting off her finger at some point.

She places the bread on a cookie sheet and puts it in the oven to make her garlic bread, and adds the roasted onions, tomatoes and garlic to the tomato 'sauce'. She drains the water from the noodles and mixes butter and parmesan in to add more flavor. It turns out quite nice if she does say so herself.

She's a bit embarrassed when Joy comes home, the meal would never pass at the Wheeler's, but she hopes it will here, and she dishes up Joyce some cheesy noodles, topped with the thicken sauce, and throws some cheese shreds on top, along with two pieces of the homemade garlic toast.

Joyce's jaw drops at the plate of food Nancy sets in front of her. Never having been a huge cook herself, if there wasn't stuff for sandwiches, a burger, a frozen pizza or macaroni, there was no food in the house. She hadn't a fucking clue where Nancy's found the stuff, but it looks delicious. Nancy hovers over her, trying to pretend she's not, as Joyce takes a bite. The thing is, it's good. And not even for having no food, good like Joyce would eat this all the time.

To her shock and surprise, tears fill her eyes, and she jumps up, grabbing her plate,
"This is so good Nancy, I'm just gonna eat in my room and relax a bit before work," She says quickly.

"Oh of course, I understand! I'll just wait for the boys to get home," she says, turning to the sink full of dishes.

Joyce finishes the food quickly and smokes three cigarettes before changing into her new uniform. She brings her dishes out of her room and sets them in the sink. Nancy's sitting, finally, at the table, feeding Holly, and Joyce is quick to sneak to the door with just quick goodbye.

She meets Jonathan at the door, who's just getting his keys to unlock it. Mike and Will are with him, each boy carrying a plastic bag from the video store.

"Mom," says Jonathan, "You're leaving already?"

"Yes, um, boys, go inside," she says, moving to the side. Will gives her a quick hug and then she turns to Jonathan.

"We need to talk when I get home young man," says Joyce.

"What? Why?"

"About the fact that you've got Karen Wheeler's daughter in there cooking like you guys have been married for five years."

"I-" Jonathan has the decency to look embarrassed.

"If you don't think that's where this is going Jonathan then you need to tell that girl. She's head over heels for you."

His cheeks flush and he shakes his head,

"She's really not," he protests.

"Jonathan," Joyce starts in, right before Will busts from around the kitchen,

"Come on Jonathan! Nancy found Kool-Aid! The blue kind!" he says excited, a piece of garlic bread in his hand.

Joyce raises an eyebrow,
"I will talk to you later young man."

Jonathan nods,
"Okay."